

WASHINGTON, D. C., SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1919.

A COLUMN OF THEATER GOSSIP

By EARLE DORSEY

Ol' Doc Ed Wynn, erstwhile possessor of the world's most versatile sombrero and still owner, in fee simple, of the world's most insane and convulsive giggle, will file an answer, at 8:15 o'clock tomorrow night at the National, to the query that has been reiterated in print at least a score of times since the actors' strike: What is Ed Wynn doing for a living?

Mr.—that is, Doctor—Wynn found himself with a somewhat uncertain future before him at the time the recent Broadway armistice was signed. He was out of a job, temporarily, and he was far too facile a comedian to cast his lot with any old show that might be clamoring for his services. It is manifest that the doctor did a bit of thinking as to the future of any comedian in these mad, mad days, and it is not unnatural that the successful independent careers mapped out for themselves by fun-merchants like Jolson, Bayes, Hitchcock and a few other ribald headliners suddenly possessed a new lure for this truly eminent dispenser of merriment.

In the meantime Broadway was asking and answering its own questions concerning Wynn, but only within the past few weeks has the comedian himself seen fit to meet this curiosity with a statement. The answer, of course, is the first edition of the Ed Wynn Carnival, a musical revue which, by its numerically qualifying phrase, seems destined for annual revision and freshening from now on, provided Doc Wynn has not lost his cunning for comic diagnosis amid the trials of a producer's life.

It cannot be contended that Wynn is other than one of the foremost of all American fun-makers. His humor has a deprecating personality, a trenchant, incisive quality that stamps its output as based on the deepest originality. The mere record of the shows in which this comedian has been headlined for years is sufficient earnest alone to remove all doubt as to his standing, and when one considers that Hitchcock, Bayes and Jolson have long been reaping harvests at the head of their own shows, and when even sublimated chorus men in these amusement-crazy times can throw together concoctions of jazz that draw the sheikhs, one feels but trifling anxiety for the outcome of Dr. Wynn's effort, which bursts forth at the National tomorrow night.

It seems a rather striking coincidence that another comedian of fame should also select Washington this week to launch out in a field of entertainment endeavor. This other comedian is Clifton Crawford, who sings as mean an accent and enunciation on "Gunga Din" as vaudeville ever heard, and in this particular case Mr. Crawford has deserted variety to head a farce-comedy cast called "My Lady Friends." It is a production that advance agents have elucidated in a rather vague and hazy way, though it is altogether likely that "My Lady Friends," in common with the average farce-comedy, relies more upon the snap-panness and the 275 per cent naughtiness of its lines for effect than upon any solid plot structure.

Nevertheless, it is a new offering and Washington has fallen into the habit of expecting its offerings to be new. It will open at the Belasco tonight, according to announcements, and one wishes Mr. Crawford success in his effort. This wish draws a double distillation of sincerity from the fact that one's Puritan conscience, long since supposed extinct, occasionally rebels and something worth-while is necessary to soothe it.

The Garrick offers a play now to Washington, though it has already enjoyed a long run in New York. It is a melodrama—one of the frankly 190 per cent proof ones. Davis variety—and its chief ingredients, we gather, are mystery, marriage and murder, a trinity of theme that perennial pair, Potash and Perlmutter, in "Business Before Pleasure," the same being an account of the adventures of these bitter friends in the "illum" business.

Temporarily turning away from attractions current, it is a pleasure to record that "The Son-Daughter," Mr. Belasco's latest offering, with Lenore Ulric as star, which showed its wares to Washington a week ago, has passed the critical New York entrance examination and is safely anchored for a run at the Belasco.

Mr. Brown, of the Tribune, easily one of the most exacting of the newspaper professors of the drama, has seen fit to laud it with moderation, which is high praise, coming from Mr. Brown. A portion of his remarks anent the production follow:

After seeing the first performance of "The Son-Daughter" at the Belasco Theater last night we are inclined to believe that David Belasco deserves his title of wizard. Give him a silk hat, even though it be worn a little shiny here and there, and he can invariably thrust in his hand and pull out a pair of white rabbits, or start him off with a few carrot slips and he will conjure up for you a bowl of goldfish. If only the public with all this clever trickery is that there is a singular lack of character and variety in both rabbits and goldfish. You know, after all, that there isn't really any gold in goldfish, not an ounce more than in carrots. Nothing much is gained by the experiment except a little superficial glitter.

Last night Mr. Belasco took a middling good sentimental-comedy-melodrama, by George Scarborough and himself, stuffed it into the rusty silk hat, jabbed about a bit with a wand, uttered a few magic words like "rosebuds," "lily blossoms," "great joss" and "honorable ancestors," and finally pulled out a play of new China which, at times, attained the stature of vital, moving drama almost entirely from the skill and imagination with which it was staged. However, part of the trick lay in the fact that before Mr. Belasco put in his hand and said "Fresto!" he dropped Lenore Ulric, Albert Brunning, Harry Metastayer, Edmond Lowe and several other excellent players into the old silk hat and stirred them up a bit.

When James Montgomery's "Irene" burst on the Capital the same week Mr. Belasco's play premiered, nearly all present were sure "Irene" was ready for Manhattan. Mr. Montgomery, probably thinking the same thing himself, ushered "Irene" past Manhattan Transfer and found her quarters at the Vanderbilt Theater, where she has since lived up to her title by becoming the village queen of musical comedies. The following remarks of the New York Herald seem to echo the representative New York sentiment regarding the show, which proves, of course, that Washington can frequently pick them accurately:

Give the blue ribbon to "Irene," judge; she's the sweetest filly of the lot. The musical comedy of that name, presented last night at the Vanderbilt Theater, is a tuneful, tickling triumph, and Miss Edith Day—first entry as a star—sparkled and sang and sparkled. The only thing of conspicuous prominence Miss Day has done before was to sing and dance "The Tickle Toe" and otherwise cavort in "Going Up" two years ago. She is still going up. Miss Day displayed versatility as an entertainer and much genuine charm last night.

James Montgomery wrote a light plot with some real sentimental appeal for "Irene." Harry Tierney wrote a score that it will take an able composer indeed to hurdle over, and Joe McCarthy came out of a past of varied maiden scribbles to write some real lyrics. Pardon the mixed metaphors, but the man at the next desk is writing something about the horse show. Yes; and in the corner someone else is tearing off reams about the prince. Well, one feels certain that the prince would enjoy "Irene."

Who does not remember Charlotte Greenwood, who was ridiculously funny in "So Long, Letty"? Charlotte was funny in that piece, in point of fact, that a solid protest against the title of that piece was voiced by casting Charlotte in another piece of drollery called "Linger Longer, Letty." Charlotte showed her new piece to Broadway the other night, and the verdict follows:

Long-legged Letty returned to town last night, after an overlong absence and was welcomed at the Fulton Theater, the play being "Linger Longer, Letty," in which Miss Charlotte Greenwood stars in one of her attenuated comedy roles.

This musical comedy is a lineal descendant of "So Long, Letty," in which Miss Greenwood said au revoir some time ago before leaving to lift a frolicsome slipper over the Rocky Mountains and points West.

Miss Greenwood has handed over considerably, and is not quite so riotous as of yore. She has no more of the "So Long, Letty" as the lines of the play made her, and she was in very shapely company. The shapely company was in the form, or forms, of a sizeable play started in like a comedy, with incidental songs. They crowded the kitchen scene a bit, and many a comely leg was kicking around among the pots and pans.

HARRY'S FIRST AMIABLE ALIAS

It is not pleasant to have to answer it is so different from my real self."

Mr. First is an oldtimer in one sense; that is, he has been in vaudeville for many years, those years back when vaudeville was known as variety. But when the first Potash and Perlmutter plays were introduced, in 1913, Harry then became Mawruss, and he is often greeted with the words:

"Hello, Mawruss."

"Do I mind being called that?" asked Mr. First. "No, because I rather like the stage Mawruss, although it is a different character, than J. The stage Mawruss is a quarrelsome man, while I am really a very shy and quiet. I guess the reason I like the part so well is because it is so different from my real self."

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Attractions at the Washington Theaters

John Drinkwater
Author of Abraham Lincoln
Coming Next Week
Garrick

Ed Wynn
Starring in
"The Ed Wynn Carnival"
National

John Kingsley
Clifton Crawford
with "My Lady Friends"
Belasco to-night

Mona Kingsley
Clifton Crawford
with "My Lady Friends"
Belasco to-night

Clara Swanson
in "Male and Female"
Garden

Wm. Rock Keiths
in "The Invisible Bond"
Columbia

Irene Castle
in "The Invisible Bond"
Columbia

Constance Talmadge
in "The Virtuous Vamp"
Rialto

Wm. Russell
in "Eastward, Ho"
Grandalls

Burton Holmes
National
To-night

Tom Moore
in "The Gay Lord Quex"
Metropolitan

Margie Hilton
Lyceum

Katherine McDonald
Coming
Strand

Rachmaninoff
Polis Tuesday

Wallace Reid
in "The Lottery Man"
Knickerbocker

Geo. F. Hayes
Gayety
Jessie Reed
Cosmos

Scene from
At 945
Garrick

THE YORK MAKES ITS BOW

Announcement was made yesterday by Harry M. Crandall, owner of the chain of Crandall theaters in the Capital, that the York Theater, occupying the entire square between Princeton and Quebec streets on Georgia avenue northwest, and constituting the eighth house in the Crandall circuit, will be opened to the public on Wednesday night, November 26.

The York represents the most modern design of photoplay theater, the seating arrangements being entirely on one floor with a comfortable capacity of 1,000. The front of the building is of tapestry brick, trimmed with white stone and marble. The spacious lobby is artistically arranged and of unusual height, insuring perfect ventilation at all times. The auditorium proper is especially handsome, a novel treatment having been given the proscenium arch by Hobart Henley. Every critic and authority, gathered together the twenty best short stories of the year and publishes them in one volume. In 1917 Edna Ferber's "The Gay Old Dog" won a prominent place in the collection.

Miss Ferber's is a name well known in the literary world. Every book shelf boasts several of her books, for she writes real stories about real people—her stories are loved and understood by all classes. She has written several books, "Roast Beef Medium," "Dawn O'Hara," "Buttered Side Down," "Personality Plus," "Emma McChesney," and "Penny Herself." "Cheerful by Request," her newest book, is a volume of short stories, containing "The Gay Old Dog," which has been pronounced her best short story.

"The Follies of the Day," the attraction at the Gayety Theater this week, held a record last season for the greatest amount of business at the Gayety Theater.

Lloyd Hughes is the latest graduate of the Ince school to be promoted to the star class. Hughes is possibly the youngest actor on the screen to achieve this marked honor, which was awarded him by Thomas H. Ince in recognition of the fine artistry of his recent impersonations. The contract signed recently covers a period of five years, during which the young star will appear in a number of carefully selected stories by the leading screen writers of the day.

Mr. John Gernon, one of the directors of the Columbia Amusement Company, spent several days in town last week with Harry O. Jarboe, manager of the Gayety Theater.

Opera Founded on
Tarkington's Story
To Be Presented

Gilbert Miller's production of Andre Messager's romantic opera, "Monsieur Beaucaire," founded on Booth Tarkington's famous story, with libretto by Frederick Lonsdale, and lyrics by Adrian Ross, will be given the first performance in America on Thursday evening, December 11, at the New Amsterdam Theater, New York.

It was the triumph production of "Monsieur Beaucaire" in London that established Mr. Miller, an American, as the foremost light opera impresario of the British metropolis.

There it was looked upon as another bond of interest between the great allies. Not only the producer, but also the author of the original story and the actor who played the leading role, are Americans. The composer is a Frenchman and the librettist and lyricist are Englishmen.

London theatergoers hastened to acclaim it and to crowd the theater where it was presented.

Mr. Miller himself has returned to America to supervise the production of the play here, and it will be given with the same ensemble as in London and with the same superb scenic investiture.

"Aphrodite" Ready
For Gotham Premiere
Tomorrow Evening

The first presentation in America of "Aphrodite" will take place at the Century Theater, New York, tomorrow night when R. Ray Comstock and Morris Gest will offer this famous Parisian sensation, written by Pierre Frondave and George C. Hazelton and founded upon the celebrated novel by Pierre Louys.

The staging is under the direction of E. Lyall Swete, while the chorographic scenes and dances are being arranged by Michel Fokine, a famous Russian dancer, who will live long in theatrical history as the man who created the modern Russian ballet.

The scenery has been painted in London by Joseph and Philip Harcourt and the costumes are by Percy Anderson and Leon Bakst.

Rehearsals are now under way day and night at the Century Theater for this spectacular production.

Attractions Listed
At Local Theaters
For Week of Dec. 1

BELASCO—Roland West's mystery play, "The Unknown Purple," George Probert, Jean Stuart, Benedict MacQuarrie, Herbert Ashton, Vivian Allen, Eveta Knudsen, Joseph Slaytor, Henry Rodding, Arthur LeVine, Grant Sherman and E. L. Duane in the cast, usual Wednesday and Saturday matinee will be given.

NATIONAL—Otis Skinner in his new comedy, "The Rise of Peter Barban," written by Maud Skinner and Jules Eckert Goodman; scenes laid in Western Pennsylvania and California; cast will include O. B. Clarence, Mary Shaw, Ruth Ross, Thurlow Ber-

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Skinner Takes Rank
As Insurance "Champ"

Whatever else he may claim in the form of achievement during his theatrical career, Otis Skinner is safe to place a wager that he is the most highly insured actor in America. It is doubtful if even Douglas Fairbanks and Charlie Chaplin, the film stars, are carrying as much insurance on their lives as there is on Mr. Skinner's. Up to this hour of writing it has piled up to \$1,250,000.

To be sure, Mr. Skinner hasn't taken out all of this sum on himself, nor has Charles Frohman, the manager whose management he is now touring in "The Rise of Peter Barban," which comes to Washington soon. The beneficiary and the insurer is the moving picture concern for whom Mr. Skinner has agreed to make a picture of "Kismet" when he gets the time.

John A. Morrison, agent for the Aetna Insurance Company, of Chicago, is now engaged in placing the policies with fifteen different companies. He already has placed \$500,000, and expects to have the remainder written in a short time.

Meanwhile Mr. Skinner is one of the most carefully attended men in the United States. If he even sneezes or stubs his toe, a high-priced physician pounces on him, equipped with all kinds of remedies.

On several occasions when he has arrived in a city to begin a week's engagement he has found awaiting him in his dressing room bottles of ammonia and other liniments, boxes of pills, bandages, and once a pair of crutches.

FARCE-COMEDY OWN PORTIA

There is a young lady with "My Lady Friends," the new farce comedy coming to the Shubert-Belasco this evening, who, besides being quite successful as an actress, has also the distinction of being the only actress on the stage who can step into any courtroom in the United States and practice law. The young lady is Miss Jessie Nagle, a young Kansas girl, whose father is a prominent judge in Kansas City.

She was educated at a girls' seminary, and after graduating went into her father's law office and took up the study of law. She has her papers and is considered quite a lady barrister. Last season, while playing Chicago, she spent quite a bit of her time around the various courts, especially the moral court, where most of the poorer people have their divorce cases laid and also where one will meet with women who are unfortunate. One morning a case was called of a poor soul who had no one to defend her and Miss Nagle, who happened to be

MR. BRESKIN GRABS A FIDDLER

Of the hundreds of people who remarked about the beautiful musical score as given by the Rialto orchestra during the past week and the exceptionally excellent manner in which same was rendered, probably few realized that while hearing it they were listening to an artist who, in concert, had drawn as high as \$10 per seat.

Elias Breskin, the celebrated Russian violinist, heard in concert in Washington very recently and who last year toured the country as co-artist with Caruso, is the younger brother of Daniel Breskin, director of the Rialto orchestra. He has been sojourning in Washington the past few days for reasons in which young Dan Cupid may be held completely responsible. The younger Mr. Breskin strolled into the Rialto one day the early part of this week, intent upon enjoying the show. He was doomed to disappointment, however, for he was hardly seated before the elder brother was made aware of his presence and from that point on and for two or three days afterward Rialto patrons were given a treat. Mr. Breskin was promptly called to the music-room by his brother, provided with the finest violin in the possession of any of the orchestra members, and bluntly speaking, put to work.

Director Breskin, at the time he took the above action, little realized just what he was letting himself and his fellow artists in for. It was not long before the great artist had every member of the organization doing his best to live up to the tones and masterly rendition of a first violin score that seemed to sway and predominate every selection played. The audience was likewise quick to catch the spirit of the affair and applause was frequently given.

On the second day during the afternoon performance Director Breskin surrendered his baton to his brother who conducted the orchestra through the entire score in masterly fashion.

Genuineness and absolute realism are two factors in the enormous success which Cecil B. De Mille has attained as a motion picture director. These qualities are present in "Male and Female," Mr. De Mille's latest Paramount-Artcraft picture, which was adapted from Sir James M. Barrie's famous play, "The Admirable Crichton," which opens its second week at the Garden Theater today. It is Mr. De Mille's desire that every property or furnishing used in his productions be the best that can be bought. Proprietor of the stage, he has spent over one thousand dollars in value. One toilet set alone cost \$5,000, and the gorgeous gowns worn by Gloria Swanson, Lila Lee and Lillian Daniels, who are in the cast, are worth a handsome price.

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